THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

Vol. VI. *Philadelphia, Saturday, October* 29, 1808. No. 18.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 260.)

LETTER LII.

We stopped for an hour or two at Martigny, the Octadurum mentioned by Cæsar, where one of his legions under Galba, had nearly been overpowered by the people of the country. The ravages of the Drance and of the Rhone must have altered the face of the country very considerably, and yet there are persons who pretend to point out the place where Galba's camp was. I remember a General Melville, disputing with a young man of Martigny upon that subject many years ago; the General, with Cæsar's Commentaries in his hand, wondered at the Vallaisan's presumption in differing from him, and in pretending to be better acquainted with the country than Cæsar was.

Two roads descend into the valley of the Rhone, near Martigny: the one is from Chamouny, over the Col de Balme, and the other over the great St. Bernard. This last was the one made use of by Buonaparte for the passage of his army, in 1801; an undertaking in which a bold originalness of enterprize was aided by the powers of an intelligent and vigorous execution; 600, 800, and 1000 livres had been previously offered for the transportation across the mountain of pieces of artillery, according to their caliber, and the whole peasantry of the neighbourhood were set in motion; trees hollowed into troughs received the guns, the peasants harnessed themselves, the soldiers volunteered their services, without condescending to share in the reward; and the astonishing spectacle was

afforded, of an army marching by large detachments with all the cumbrous apparatus of war along the winding narrow path of a mountain, which rises to the height of 7500 feet above its base: in the narrow plain, on the ascent, is a hospice; it has existed for many centuries, and the good fathers,* who reside in this, the loftiest of all human habitations, have been ever distinguished for their active zeal in behalf of the unfortunate, and for their kindness and hospitality to persons of all nations and of all religions: the fall of an avalanche, which has obstructed the road, or a snow storm of uncommon violence, is a call upon their humanity. They sally forth, from their convent, and, aided by the sagacity of their dogs, very frequently discover a way-worn traveller, either buried beneath a heap of drifted snow, or seated in all the bitterness of despair on the brink of some frightful precipice: figure to yourself the sensations of him, who, uncertain what course to pursue, amid the snows of the mountain, hears the cheerful sound of the convent bell at a distance, or sees a person approach, in whose countenance, zeal, courage, and humanity, are blended with piety. The good sense of the 1st Consul had pointed out to him the propriety of protecting these respectable men, at the same time that he rendered them useful to his army; they were furnished with money, that they might provide everything in time, which the soldiers could properly have occasion for, and a frugal, but plentiful, repast, was always ready for each detachment, as it arrived. It must have been an interesting sight to have beheld some thousands of men, seated in circles upon this little plain, amid scenes of eternal winter, and waited upon by the fathers of the convent. The whole of the passage was effected in three days, and without the loss of a man: the citadel, which commanded the descent into the plain, was too scantily supplied with ammunition, to oppose any serious obstacle.

Providence, which meant, we are to presume, that the Emperour's power in Italy should be destroyed, and the hopes of the King of Sardinia forever crushed, seems, as the proverb expresses it, to have previously deprived their ministers and generals of all sense and recollection. No people are said to be so attached to their home, as the inhabitants of mountainous countries: the very difficulty of establishing themselves, and of making a living, is attended with exertions, which are perhaps flattering to the human mind, and a variety of objects and circumstances, which we know nothing of in the plain, take an agreeable and lasting hold upon the imagination; they are, at the same time, subject to many privations, and to great calamities.

We were shown a place, on our way to the Glaciers, last year, where part of a mountain had formerly given way, and covered with its ruins, a number of inhabitants at its base; and upwards of two thousand people are said to have perished upon a similar occasion, in the Grisons.

You will find an account of it in the travels of Coxe or of Miss

* Upon inquiry immediately after my arrival at Geneva, I was informed that no agent from St. Bernard had ever been commissioned to collect contributions in America, and that the persons who went, with so much success, under that pretence, from one end of the United States to the other, were impostors, who had imposed on the credulity of the Secretary of State at Washington.

Williams, as having happened near the little town of Pleirs, in the century before the last. An event of the same sort took place in the mountains of the Vallais, about midway between Bex and Sion, in the year 1713—the whole projecting eminence of a lofty mountain fell suddenly, and covered with its ruins nearly two leagues of fertile country: the greater part of the inhabitants of this devoted spot were fortunately absent, but such as were at home perished, together with upwards of 100 head of cattle, and several flocks of sheep and goats. The traveller, who now wanders over this scene of devastation, sees a misshapen mass of horrid rocks, descending, like the lava of Vesuvius, to the edge of the most fertile spots in a beautiful valley, and beholds the cottager, either at work, or surrounded by his family at home, with an appearance of perfect security, though the neighbouring eminences project, many of them, in a way, which renders the renewal of the same calamity every moment probable.

The goitre is another evil, which frequently attends the inhabitants of mountainous countries, and when it leads, as it too frequently does, to idiotism, is what you would, I fancy, be more afraid of, for your children, than of a falling mountain. The origin of this deformity, has been variously explained; it is to a slight degree prevalent in the largest vallies of the Alps, and I have seen many instances of it in Geneva, but it is nowhere to be found at the height of 4000 feet above the sea, or in the open plains of Europe; the probability is, that it arises from a great degree of heat, and from the stagnation of the air. I never saw any individuals of the wretched race that are called Cretins, but in situations where those causes may be supposed to operate most powerfully: nothing is perhaps better suited to humble the pride of man, than the view of a fellow-creature devested of all reason, and with a degree of instinct far inferiour to that of the greater part of brutes. In passing through Villeneuve, which is not far from the city of d'Aost, says Mr. de Saussure, I wished to ask some questions; but could find no one to answer me; such of the inhabitants as were capable of any exertion, were at work in the fields, and the few wretched objects I saw in the streets were Cretins in the various stages of imbecility; a gloomy silence, or a few inarticulate sounds, attended by a stupid unmeaning stare, explained to me at once, that all of them were idiots. It seemed as if some evil genius, such as we read of in fairy tales, had passed before me, and converted the objects of its malevolence into brutes, leaving them only somewhat of their original form, that it might be seen they once belonged to the human race.

I will say nothing to you of St. Maurice or of Bex, or of the neighbouring salt mines, but refer you to books, which you possess, and in which you will find very exact descriptions.

It was almost dark when we passed through St. Maurice, and I felt like one who has made a long day's journey, after a sleepless night. I could not, however, but recognize the spot, where I had arrived, about thirty years ago, in a joyous company of young Englishmen, or but remember how struck we all were with the charms of a Vallaisanne,

in the costume of the country: you will judge of this, and of the other dresses of the Alps and of Switzerland, by a small collection I send you.

Our journey from Bex to Morge, through the finest part of the Pays de Vaud, was on a Sunday, and in good weather, after two or three days of rain; the roads were filled with people; a number were dancing in a meadow, by the lake side—it was a picture of happiness, and I endeavoured, as I looked on, to divert my attention from all but the scene before me, but if ever a blindness to the future was kindly given to any people, I believe it to have been given to these, whose fate is at this moment, perhaps, in agitation: the all-devouring ambition of their great neighbour is at work: they cannot look for assistance, or even sympathy, to any quarter, and will end by swelling the list of his subjects.

We arrived, early the next day, at Secheron, having rapidly completed a very agreeable tour, and found every body well. Of Secheron, and of our situation there, I will give you an account hereafter.

For The Port Folio.

BIOGRAPHY.

In resuming the interesting narrative of the Life of Goldsmith, we wish to call the attention of the reader to a fragment of his works, which, although one of the most ingenious and beautiful of his compositions, we believe, was wholly unknown here, till the publication of 1801. By some unaccountable *fatality*, his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Literature in Europe* had but a very limited circulation, on its first appearance. It quickly fell, but most undeservedly, into such oblivion, that of numerous editions of the Doctor's writings, not one preserved this charming production. Though one of his first performances, and written under very depressing circumstances, yet it exhibits the whole force of his mind, and all the magick of his style. Gibbon's celebrated essay on a similar subject, though industriously circulated among the witty and the fashionable; and extolled to the skies by Domestick Prejudice, and French Adulation, is by no means its equal, either for correctness of thought, or felicity of expression. We have frequently been on the point of publishing this elegant "Inquiry," in The Port Folio, and it is not improbable, that it may appear, on some future occasion, when we can find room for so precious a deposit. We dwell the more earnestly upon the merits of this elegant essay, because it is not only very elegantly, but very correctly written, and displays a vein of original thinking, and such valuable principles of Taste and Criticism, as must meet the approbation of the judicious.

In pursuing his narrative, Dr. Aiken has committed a slight mistake, which his candour will forgive us for attempting to rectify. Dr. Goldsmith, we believe, did not, in the year 1763, compile for Newbery, "The Art of Poetry," 2 vols., 12mo. We know of no other books with this title, than the compilations of Byshe and Gildon. But in the year 1767, Goldsmith, at the instigation of Mr. Newbery, published the *Beauties* of English Poetry; a work, in which are preserved some of the finest poems in the language. Each is prefixed by a short introduction, in which, Goldsmith very freely expresses his opinion of their, merit and indulges himself, sometimes, in a strain of criticism, rather more poignant than we should expect from his usual good nature. Dr. Aikin likewise mentions a "*Life of Nash*," the celebrated *beau* (we suppose) of Bath, and some time master of the revels, at that fashionable watering-place. But this article has no place

in any edition of Goldsmith's works, and we firmly believe that it was not written by him. We have perused it carefully, and it falls infinitely below his powers. It is a very meagre and spiritless production. So difficult is it to collect all the facts in an authour's variegated life, that Dr. Aikin has omitted one work, which was certainly Goldsmith's offspring: this was a Translation of *The Roman Comique*, of Monsieur Scarron. It is exceedingly scarce, and, we believe, has long been out of print. We have, however, had access to it, and it is decidedly, the best version extant of the best performance of the French wag, the other Rabelais of his country.

MEMOIRS

OF

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M. B.

(*Continued from page* 264.)

Early in the year 1763 Goldsmith removed to lodgings at Canonbury-house, Islington, where he compiled several works for Mr. Newbery; among which were, "*The Art of Poetry*," 2 vols. 12mo.; a "*Life of Nash;*" and a "*History of England, in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son.*" This latter book was for a long time attributed to George Lord Lyttelton.

In the following year he took chambers on the upper story of the Library stair-case in the Inner Temple, and began to live in a genteel style. Still, however, he was little known, except among the booksellers, till the year 1765, when he produced his Poem called "*The Traveller; or, A Prospect of Society*," which had obtained high commendation from Dr. Johnson, who declared, "that there had not been so fine a Poem since the the time of Pope;" yet such was Goldsmith's diffidence, that, though he had completed it some years before, he had not courage enough to publish, till urged to it by Johnson's suggestions. This poem heightened his literary character with the booksellers, and introduced him to several persons of superiour rank and talents, as Lord Nugent (afterwards Earl of Clare), Mr. Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Bennet Langton, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, &c. and he was elected one of the first members of "The Literary Club," which had been just instituted by Johnson, Burke, and Sir Joshua, and met at the Turk's-head, Gerard-street, Soho, every Friday evening.

His pathetick ballad of "*The Hermit*," which was also published in 1765, recommended him to the Countess (afterwards Duchess) of Northumberland, who was a generous patroness of merit. In the following year his "*Vicar of Wakefield*" was printed and universally read and admired.

His reputation being now fairly established as a novelist, a poet, and a critick, Goldsmith turned his thoughts to the drama, and set about his comedy called "*The Good-natured Man.*" This he first offered to Garrick, who, after a long fluctuation between doubt and encouragement, at length declined bringing it forward at Drury-lane theatre; it was therefore taken to Covent-garden, accepted by Mr. Colman, and presented for the first time on the 29th of January, 1768. It was acted nine times; and by the profits of the authour's three third-nights, with the sale of the copy-right, a clear 500*l.* was produced.

With this, and some money which he had reserved out of the produce of a "*Roman History*," in 2 vols. 8vo. and other works, he was enabled to descend from his attick story in the Inner Tem-

ple, and to purchase for 400*l.* and furnish elegantly, a spacious set of chambers on the first floor, at No. 2, Brick-court, Middle Temple.

On the establishment of the Royal Academy, in 1769, Sir Joshua Reynolds recommended Goldsmith to his Majesty for the Honorary Professorship of History, which was graciously conferred on him. In the following year he produced that highly-finished poem called "*The Deserted Village.*" Previous to its publication, we are told, the bookseller (Mr. Griffin, of Catharine-street, Strand) had given him a note of a hundred guineas for the copy. This circumstance Goldsmith mentioned soon afterwards to a friend, who observed that it was a large sum for so small a performance. "In truth," replied Goldsmith, "I think so too; it is near five shillings a couplet, which is much more than the honest man can afford, and, indeed, more than any modern poetry is worth. I have not been easy since I received it; I will, therefore, go back, and return him his note;" which he actually did: but the sale was so rapid, that the bookseller soon paid him the hundred guineas, with proper acknowledgments for the generosity of his conduct.

Soon after the appearance of the Deserted Village, our authour paid a tribute to the memory of *Dr. Parnell*, in a *Life* prefixed to a new edition of his "Poems on several occasions." In the year 1771, he produced his "*History of England from the earliest times to the death of George II.*" in 4 vols. 8vo. for which Mr. Thomas Davies, the bookseller, paid him 500*l.*

The Earl of Lisburne, one day at a dinner of the Royal Academicians, lamented to Goldsmith that he should neglect the Muses, to compile histories and write novels, instead of penning poetry, with which he was sure to charm his readers. "My Lord," replied our authour, "in courting the Muses I should starve; but by my other labours I eat, drink, wear good clothes, and enjoy the luxuries of life."

Goldsmith had, besides his regular works, much of the other business of an authour by profession; such as penning Prefaces and Introductions to the books of other writers; some of these have been published among his prose works; but, no doubt, many remain at this day unknown.

His second dramatick effort, being a comedy called "*She Stoops to Conquer;* or, *The Mistakes of a Night*," was first presented at Covent-garden theatre, March 15, 1773, and received with an applause fully adequate to the authour's sanguine hopes, and contrary to the expectations of Mr. Colman, who had not consented to receive the piece but at the earnest and reiterated instances of many friends. What was called sentimental comedy had at that time got an unaccountable hold of the publick taste: Kelly was subserving this unbritish propensity by his "False Delicacy," &c. and Goldsmith's piece (which was designed by him to bring back the town to a relish of humour) being certainly in the opposite extreme, and hardly anything else than a farce of five acts instead of two, Colman, and his actors from him, had predestined the play to condemnation: when, therefore, towards the conclusion of the first performance, the authour expressed some apprehension least one of the jokes put into the mouth of Tony Lumpkin should not be re-

lished by the audience, the Manager, who had been in fear through the whole piece, replied, "D—n it Doctor, don't be terrified at a squib; why, we have been sitting these two hours on a barrel of gunpowder." Goldsmith's pride was so hurt at this remark, that the friendship which had till then subsisted between him and Colman was thenceforth annihilated.

The piece had a great run, and its authour cleared by the third-nights, and the sale of the copy, upwards of 800*l.* Doctor Johnson said of it, "That he knew of no comedy for many years that had so much exhilarated an audience, that had answered so much the great end of comedy, the making an audience merry." It certainly added much to the authour's reputation, and is still, with his "Good-natured Man," on the list of acting plays; but it brought on him the envy and malignity of some of his cotemporaries; and in the London Packet of Wednesday, March 24, 1773, printed for T. Evans, in Paternoster-row, appeared the following scurrilous epistle, evidently designed to injure his third-night (being the ninth representation):

"TO DR. GOLDSMITH.

"*Vous vous noyez en vanite.*

"SIR—The happy knack which you have learnt of puffing your own compositions, provokes me to come forth. You have not been the editor of newspapers and magazines, not to discover the trick of literary *humbug*. But the gauze is so thin, that the very foolish part of the world see through it, and discover the Doctor's monkey face and cloven foot. Your poetick vanity is as unpardonable as your personal. Would man believe it, and will woman bear it, to be told, that for hours the *great* Goldsmith will stand surveying his grotesque Oranhotan's figure in a pier-glass? Was but the lovely H——k as much enamoured, you would not sigh, my gentle swain, in vain. But your vanity is preposterous. How will this same bard of Bedlam ring the changes in praise of Goldy! But what has he to be either proud or vain of? "The Traveller" is a flimsy poem, built upon false principles; principles diametrically opposite to liberty. What is "The Good-natured Man," but a poor, water-gruel, dramatick dose? What is "The Deserted Village," but a *pretty* poem of easy numbers, without fancy, dignity, genius, or fire? And pray, what may be the last speaking pantomime,* so praised by the Doctor himself, but an incoherent piece of stuff, the figure of a woman with a fish's tail, without plot, incident, or intrigue? We are made to laugh at stale, dull jokes, wherein we mistake pleasantry for wit, and grimace for humour: wherein every scene is unnatural, and inconsistent with the rules, the laws of nature and of the drama: viz. Two gentlemen come to a man of fortune's house, eat, drink, sleep, &c. and take it for an inn. The one is intended as a lover to the daughter, he talks with her for some hours, and when he sees her again, in a different dress, he treats her as a bar-girl, and swears she squinted. He abuses the master of the house, and threatens to kick him out of his own doors. The 'Squire, who, we are told, is to be a fool, proves to be the most sensible being of the piece; and he makes out a whole act, by bidding his mother lie close behind a bush, persuading her, that his father, her own husband, is a highwayman, and that he is come to cut their throats; and to give his cousin an opportunity to go off, he drives his mother over hedges, ditches, and through ponds. There is not, sweet, sucking Johnson, a natural stroke in the whole play, but the young fellow's giving the stolen jewels to the mother, supposing her to be the landlady. That Mr. Colman did no jus-

* Meaning *She stoops to Conquer.*

tice to this piece, I honestly allow; that he told all his friends it would be damned, I positively aver: and from such ungenerous insinuations, without a dramatick merit, it rose to publick notice; and it is now the *ton* to go to see it, though I never saw a person that either liked it or approved it, any more than the absurd plot of *the Home's* tragedy of Alonzo. Mr. Goldsmith, correct your arrogance, reduce your vanity, and endeavour to believe, as a man you are of the plainest sort, as an authour but a mortal piece of mediocrity.

" *Brisez le miroir infidele,*
" *Qui vous cache la verite.*

" TOM TICKLE."

By one of those " d——d good-natured friends," who are described by Sir Fretful Plagiary, the newspaper containing the foregoing offensive letter, was eagerly brought to Goldsmith, who otherwise, perhaps, had never seen or heard of it. Our hero went to the shop, brimful of ire, and finding Evans behind his counter, thus addressed him: " You have published a thing in your paper (my name is Goldsmith) reflecting upon a young lady. As for myself I do not mind it"—Evans at this moment stooped down, intending, probably, to look for a paper, that he might see what the enraged authour meant; when Goldsmith, observing his back to present a fair mark for his cane, laid it on lustily. The bibliopolist, however soon defended himself, and a scuffle ensued, in which our authour got his full share of blows. Dr. Kenrick, who was sitting in Evans's counting-house (and who was strongly suspected to have been the writer of the letter) now came forward, parted the combatants, and sent Goldsmith home in a coach grievously bruised.

(*To be continued.*)

For The Port Folio.

LEVITY.

Whether it be owing to the dullness of the times, or to the phlegm of the American temperament, or to lack of brains, wit and humour are rarities in our country. France, Scotland, England, and Ireland, even in the midst of the calamities of war, are gay and sportive still. Their papers are crowded with articles of a cheerful complexion. Witty volumes are published daily. Epigrams, jokes, *quips and cranks* abound. But in America, the solemn, the sedate, the humdrum appear to be the reigning vogue. Much is written and published here, but principally of an exceedingly grave cast. Our literature has as long and as woful a visage as many of those Puritans, from whom we are so fortunately descended. A great majority of the elaborate essays of our *Columbian composuists*, for solemn stupidity, would exactly suit the taste of *Praise-God-Barebones*, or any other religious rascal, concerned in his rebellion. A few brilliant exceptions present themselves. That amusing work, the *Salmagundi* of New-York, was remarkable for spritely sallies of wit. But the authours too soon became weary, and New York is as serious as of yore. The *Monthly Anthology* is distinguished by many brilliant proofs of genius and of wit, and indeed, is never dull. From this truly elegant Journal, which is superiour to many magazines published abroad, we derive frequent entertainment, and much instruction. The following sarcasm upon our *Babylonish dialect*, is, we suspect, the production of an amiable friend, a most accomplished scholar, and a high-principled man, who, in the metropolis of Britain, would be upon a perfect footing with her most esteemed writers.

Cis-Atlantick Anomalies.

The following letter contains a curious specimen of *Americanisms*,

as all the words in Italicks are peculiar to our country, or employed in a different sense from what they would convey in pure English.

DEAR SIR,

When you come to town, I shall be *happy to wait on you* at my house. I am sorry to inform you, that the *store*, you desired me to engage, is *improved* by another tenant, the owner having *misremembered* my application in your favour. You will, however, find no difficulty in suiting yourself, as rents are not likely to *appreciate* during the embargo. Our *caucus* terminated in a town-meeting, in which a petition to the President to remove it, was ably *advocated* by our best speakers, and a committee of our most approved *composuists* were appointed to draught the petition. You will be so good as to let me know where your friend *keeps*, when he comes to town, as I was not at home to *wait on him*, when he called.

We had a *nice time* last night, at club, though we were rather *slim* in the article of wine. Some of your good old Madeira would have been a considerable *addition* to the pleasure of our entertainment. I must beg you to engage your correspondent to send me a pipe, though I can *illy* afford it, if business should thus continue *slack*. May kind Providence *succeed* our petition, and may the spirit of an *opprest* people *progress*, till the *governmental* sages of our country discover their errour, and redress our grievances. I have secured the *span* of horses you requested me to purchase for you, though I am afraid you will find them too spirited, since one of them, yesterday, broke the *whiffletree* of the *shay*, as I was driving him out of town. I am sorry to hear of the mischief done in your neighbourhood, by the late *freshet*, which, I understand, has overflowed a great deal of valuable *intervale*, and drowned your *hogreef*. Your son continues to *conduct well*, is a great *applicant*, and tells me that he shall go into Virgil before the next *congressional* meeting. Lest this letter should grow too *lengthy*, I hasten to conclude by assuring you that

I am, &c.

A. Z.

For The Port Folio.

CRITICISM.

MRS. OPIE'S NEW POEMS.

The Warriour's Return, and other poems by Mrs. Opie. London printed; Philadelphia reprinted for Bradford and Inskeep, by Robert Carr, 1808, 12*mo. pp.* 191.

(*Continued from page* 272.)

Mrs. Opie is either so habitually melancholick, or what is more probable, so affectedly sorrowful, that with the exception of the next article, not one poem of cheerful levity can be discovered in her collection. We believe that she thinks a rueful countenance is becoming, and that her black bombazine will be gazed at with much more curiosity than any of her snowy vestments. The following couplet, slightly altered from DR. YOUNG, will, we fancy, characterize her completely:

Oh how she rolls her *tearful* eyes in spite,
And looks *dejectedly*, with all her might!

But how much more graceful her mirth is than her melancholy, is strikingly perceptible in the following lines:

THE MOON AND THE COMET,

A Fable.

This fact is clear, both man and woman
Prize not what's good, but what's uncommon;
And most delighted still they are,

Not with the excellent but rare:
I could of this give proofs most stable,
But *par exemple*, take a fable:

'Twas night, but still a mimick day
Shone softly from the milky way;
For now the bright unclouded moon
'Was riding in her highest noon,'
Who, as she slowly sailed along,
Beheld a most unusual throng,
With eyes upraised, devoutly gazing,
And heard, Behold! See there! Amazing!
'What can this mean,' Dame Cynthia said,
Perhaps,' and high she drew her head,
'Perhaps, that I to earth tonight
Shine with unwonted beauty bright,
And therefore, mortals in amaze
Come crowding forth on me to gaze;'
And then for heavenly beauties love
Like earthly ones, applause to move,
She stooped within a lake below,
To see how looked her sparkling brow,
And, as her crescent she adjusted,
She thought, if mirrors might be trusted,
That night, so wondrous was her beauty,
To gaze on her was mortals' duty.
But oh! sad fall to female pride!
She soon, with wondering looks, descried
'Twas not on her their eyes were turned,
For her no curious ardour burned;
At her no telescopes were aimed,
Nor wonder at her charms proclaimed;
Some other idol, now she found
Had fickle man in fetters bound;
And Cynthia was compelled to own,
Unseen her matchless beauty shone.
'But what,' she cried 'thus rivals me?
I all the stars and planets see;
Orion has his belt in order;
Of Saturn's ring bright shines the border;
Mars sports his coat of reddest hue;
The Bear has put his horses to;
But, still, these sights so oft are seen,
There's nothing new in them, I ween:
And after all, I know the cry
Is 'They are nought when *I* am by;'—
'Tis strange, and I shall surely pout
Until I've found my rival out.'
This said, she looked on every side,
With eager looks of wounded pride,
And round, with all the spite inspected
Of conscious beauty quite neglected,
When lo! she saw, with wondering breast,
Just twinkling in the Northern-West,
And *dimly* seen, since seen from far,
A rayless, misty, long-tailed star;
While homage from her charms was *ravished*,
To be on this poor *Comet* lavished!

W—k—e beware though amateurs,
And nobles, artists, connoisseurs,
Thy works admire, thy skill commend,
And smiling o'er thy canvass bend,
Thy powers will be no more respected,
Thy crowded easel soon neglected,
If ever artist should appear,
(The *Comet* of Dame Fashion's sphere)
Who works to wondering London shows,
Not done with *fingers* but with *toes*.

This airy apologue is conceived with ingenuity, and expressed with ease; and is a very pleasing proof how *agreeable* Mrs. Opie can appear, when she ceases to blubber and bemoan herself, and laughingly casts all her *weepers* away. It may not be impertinent to add, that notwithstanding the reputation of John Hall Stevenson and Dr. Walcott, in this walk of composition, the happiest imitations of the best manner of La Fontaine, we owe to the English ladies. Mrs. Thrale's Three Warnings, and the Fable recently quoted, may be cited in proof; but particularly two fables by the late Charlotte Smith, entitled "The Lark's Nest," and "The Truant Dove," which, though they are found among the posthumous pieces of that unfortunate poetess, and were written under very disadvantageous circumstances, in sickness and sorrow, may be justly preferred to those of Gay. We are of opinion, that an accomplished woman of the world, of a gay disposition, an arch humour, and a taste for genuine simplicity, would translate or imitate La Fontaine, with more success than has hitherto been witnessed.

A perfect version of Phædrus, of Esop, and the last-mentioned French writer, who, in every respect, is fully equal to his illustrious predecessours, is a *desideratum* in English poetry. It is wonderful, that even the genius of Christopher Smart, who was unquestionably a man of brilliant talents and a poet, who could be alternately simple and sublime, was quite rebuked before the genius of the accomplished Thracian. Smart's Phædrus, is absolutely below contempt. As for La Fontaine, with the exception of one or two tales, he has been constantly travestied by some presumptuous bungler who has mistaken ribaldry for wit and wantonness for humour.

We have now arrived at the last pages of this little volume, and the *candid* readers of The Port Folio will be perfectly amazed, as it is so repugnant to the wonted gentleness of our manner, at the severity of the strictures which we have sometimes uttered. The reason may, perhaps, be found in an exceedingly imprudent avowal which our lady authouress makes in the first page of her work. "The poems (she avers) which compose this little volume, were written, with two or three exceptions, several years ago, and to arrange and fit them for publication, has been the amusement of many hours of retirement." Among the various sarcasms of Swift at the expense of his cotemporaries, particularly Dryden himself, none are more frequent than those which ridicule the vulgar excuses of authours for such imperfections as arise from ill health, hurry, and a long course of rainy weather. However frivolous such apologies may be, they at least disarm us of some of our severity. When an authour throws himself entirely upon the mercy of the court of Criticism, there is a chance for a favourable sentence, and he may obtain from Pity, what would be refused by Justice. But when a saucy female who in literature has nothing to mention, except, like Master Slender, her little *book of songs and sonnets*, comes daringly forward, declaring that they are not the hasty production of a day, but the work of years, and that, to prepare her ballads for the publick eye, has been the amusement of many hours of retirement; after all this pomp of preparation, does she not challenge Criticism to do its worst? We then are compelled by her own Imprudence, not to say Effrontery, to look narrowly at the result of so much time and labour, and, we confess, that our mortification is extreme when we perceive that the forced fruit of boasted elaboration is often nothing more than a paltry song for the use of Mr. *Biggs*, and the pastoral nonsense of the Misses Marian and Emma, than whom no lambkin they drive can be more silly.

We wish to live upon the most cordial terms with all the reading and writing ladies, with whom this best of worlds is so plentifully stocked. Nay, we have no disposition wantonly to offend the matron poetess, who solemnly talks of Henry and Laura, for our instruction. She and her admirers may perceive, that whenever there has been the least opportunity, we have not been penurious of praise. She is capable of bolder flights than any which this volume displays. We counsel her to write no more sonnets, nor to punish us with pastoral, or excruciate us with elegy; —to suffer the man Henry and his shepherdess to retire quietly into the woods, or into a cottage—or anywhere that the Goddess Privacy may demand. But for Mercy' sake, that the *Shepherd-boy* and his simpering sweetheart may never again appear in print. Mrs. Opie, we presume, is a housekeeper, and the mother of something more substantial than mere poetical bantlings. Let her cut out pantaloons for her eldest boy, or a nice frock for Anna Matilda, and Laura Seraphina. Let her sometimes migrate from the garret and descend into the kitchen. There usefully employed in the projecting of puddings, the production of pies, and the manufacture of cherry-brandy, she will shine as brilliantly as the pewter on the shelves; and while the relish of her marmalade will be remembered with rapture by many a country gentleman, her sonnets will be forgotten even by the booksellers' boys.

For The Port Folio

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

One of the most recent and most excellent productions of the British Press, has been republished here by Messrs. Bradford and Inskeep. We allude to a volume of poems by the Revd.

George Crabbe, LL. B.; a work which has been ushered into the literary world, with more marks of respect, than has been shown to any book, since POPE's translation of HOMER. Mr. Crabbe, more than twenty years ago, published three poems, entitled, The Library, The Village, and The Newspaper. These beautiful productions were so much in GOLDSMITH's best manner, that they immediately attracted the attention of the criticks, and received the favourable suffrage of every votary of Genius and Taste. After a long and regretted silence, the ingenious bard has once more *come out*, and as has been observed of one who less deserved the compliment, *he has broke* forth, like the Irish rebellion, *Forty Thousand strong*. *Two of the austerest journals published abroad are lavish in his praise. DR. JOHNSON and EDMUND BURKE read The Village, in manuscript, and liberally commended it, according to its deserts. From the minor poems, in this interesting volume, we extract the following, not so much on account of its poetical merit, but because we are fascinated with the subject, and think the authour's mode of introducing it is a signal proof of his sensibility:

Mr. Ledyard as quoted by Mr. Parke, in his travels into Africk.

"To a woman, I never addressed myself, in the language of decency and friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly answer. If I was hungry or thirsty, wet, or sick, they did not hesitate, like men, to perform a generous action: in so free and kind a manner did they contribute to my relief, that if I was dry, I drank the sweetest draught, and if hungry, I ate the coarsest morsel with a double relish.

WOMAN.

Place the white man on Africk's coast,
Whose swarthy sons in blood delight,
Who of their scorn to Europe boast,
And paint their very demons white;

There while the sterner sex disdains
To sooth the woes they cannot feel,
Woman will strive to heal his pains,
And weep for those she cannot heal:
Her's is warm Pity's sacred glow,
From all her stores she bears a part,
And bids the spring of Hope reflow
That languished in the fainting heart.

What though so pale his haggard face,
So sunk and sad his looks (she cries;),
And far unlike our nobler race,
With crisped locks and rolling eyes;
Yet Misery makes him of our kind,
We see him lost, alone, afraid;
And pangs of body, griefs in mind
Pronounce him man and ask our aid.

Perhaps in some far-distant shore,
There are who in these forms delight;
Whose milky features please them more
Than ours of jet, thus burnished bright:
Of such may be his weeping wife,
Such children for their sire may call,
And if we spare his ebbing life,
Our kindness may preserve them all.

Thus her compassion Woman shows,
Beneath the line her acts are these;
Nor the wide waste of Lapland snows
Can her warm flow of pity freeze.
'From some sad land the stranger comes,
Where joys like ours are never found;
Let's sooth him in our happy homes,
Where Freedom sits with plenty crown'd.

'Tis good the fainting soul to cheer,
To see the famished stranger fed;
To milk for him the mother deer;
To smooth for him the furry bed.
The Powers above our Lapland bless
With good no other people know;
To enlarge the joys that we possess
By feeling those that we bestow!'

Thus in extremes of cold and heat,
Where wandering man may trace his kind;
Wherever Grief and Want retreat,
In woman they compassion find;
She makes the female breast her seat,
And dictates mercy to the mind.
Man may the sterner virtues know,
Determined Justice, Truth severe;

* The Edinburgh and Anti-Jacobin Reviews.

But female hearts with pity glow,
And woman holds affliction dear;
For guiltless woes her sorrows flow,
And suffering vice compels her tear.

'Tis hers to sooth the ills below,
And bid Life's fairer views appear;
To woman's gentle kind we owe
What comforts and delights us here,
They its gay hopes on youth bestow,
And care they sooth and age they cheer.

Messrs. Kid & Thomas, booksellers at Baltimore, have lately published a very popular novel, entitled, "A Winter in London," by a Mr. *Surr*. Who this gentleman may be is a mystery through which we cannot penetrate. For ourselves, we believe that this same Sir Knight, if a very bad pun may be forgiven, is about as fictitious a character as can be found in Don Belianis of Greece, or Amadis de Gaul. However, although he chooses to fight under false colours, still he is no literary pirate; and though his vessel is not a first rate, yet his painted and gilded pinnace makes a more than tolerable appearance on the ocean of literature. In plain prose this authour distinguished himself in the outset of his career by a novel of a cast so meritorious as to warrant pretty high expectations on the appearance of a second adventure. The publick have not been disappointed. The Winter in London has been read with more avidity than any contemporaneous work of a similar complexion. In a very short period it rapidly passed through eight editions with much eclat, both in the fashionable and the literary circles. A pretty clear proof of signal merit in original composition is the appearance of a host of imitators in the train of the first inventor. Mr. S. has all this sort of testimony in his favour. His title, his plan, his narrative, his style, his scandal, have been variously copied, nor has he been denied the chaplet by the most impartial distributors of the rewards of Fame.

The interest of these volumes principally arises from a settled conviction that most of the characters have their archetypes in the fashionable world of London. Hence we have more than a glimpse of modern manners and secret history. To those, who have access to the Morning Post, and the Annals of Fashion, no key is necessary to discover whom our authour intends to lampoon. Others, perhaps, may occasionally be in the dark. However, the satire is for the most part sufficiently obvious. It is sometimes playful, and sometimes severe, and if we are not always convinced of its truth and justice, still we must give the authour credit for his ingenuity. Many of the allusions in this work are extremely happy, and the style is not inelegant. It will be read with eagerness by those who have a relish for anecdote, and considered merely as a literary production is decidedly better than many of its rivals.

VARIETY.

In the rough blast heaves the billow,
In the light air waves the willow;
Every thing of moving kind
VARIES with the veering wind:
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

Sombre tale, and satire witty,
Sprightly glee, and doleful ditty,
Measur'd sighs, and roundelay,
Welcome all! but do not stay.
What have I to do with thee,
Dull, unjoyous Constancy?

REVOLUTION IN FRANCE,

An event, from which nature and revolting humanity turn their weeping eyes: yet with all its incidental evils, and all its terrible effects, deductions may be drawn from it of the highest importance

to the interest and happiness of mankind.

Every well-meant effort to reform abuse is laudable; but we ought to recollect that the human mind, like the body, is incapable of undergoing sudden and violent changes, without injury; that the spirit, understanding, and moral feelings of a people, must be raised, amended, and purified, before political improvement can be introduced with safety, or practised with success.

To break long confirmed habits, and to attack prejudices, which, however philosophically wrong, are often practically right; to mend the various and infinitely diversified wheels of society, requires such a union of gentleness and wisdom, strength and dexterity, as falls to the lot of few.

The great and complicated mechanism of a modern mixed, commercial, wealthy government, arrived at the highest pitch of luxury and intellectual refinement, requires far abler hands to superintend and conduct it, than the simple, unattenuated despotism of the old monarchies.

It cannot be stopped without mischief, but should be carefully looked after; impediments must be cautiously removed, and all be done with temper and moderation.

In working *that immense machine, the people*, we must beware that we do not produce evils, greater than those we remove; that we do not *crush*, when we meant only to *correct;* or in vindicating the cause of oppressed liberty, we shall pave the way for ferocious democracy, and ultimately introduce, as is now the case in France, a more degrading slavery.

From the Gallick revolution, Kings, Princes, and People may learn many useful lessons;—that governments were first instituted for the welfare of the people, and not for the mere purposes of revenue;—that every nation, which does not proportion its expenditure to its income, is sowing the seeds of revolution.

That portion of mankind, dignified by title and descent, or enriched by fortune, will also see the necessity of meriting respect and attachment, by a more diligent attention to the duties of their station; by intellectual improvement, correct conduct, private rectitude, and publick decorum; or at some adverse moment, driven from the silken pavilions of pleasure, they may be compelled to exclaim, with the miserable exiles of Coblentz: *Our women and our suppers have undone us.*

Past experience and present example confirm a melancholy truth; that imperfection, like gravity, is a law of nature, that abuse has wound itself into the heart of, and imperceptibly marred the noblest institutions; that in shaking off Egyptian bondage, we only exchange the clay, the straw, and the taskmaster, of some unrelenting Pharaoh, for the perils of the deep, the idolatrous delusions of popular infatuation, the famine and wilds of the desert.

It is also to be doubted, after such long, such bloody revolutionary marches, so much toil, and so much trouble, whether the seekers after truth, have at last reached that object of all our wishes, *a political system absolutely perfect*, that land of Canaan, flowing with milk and honey.

We should, however, try to avoid the opposite extremes of unconditional submission and democratick anarchy; there is a state of lawless liberty, and licen-

tious depravity, a war with decency, clean linen, and small clothes, to which I should prefer the condition of a galley-slave, chained to his oar.

There is, on the other hand, a degrading degree of tyranny and oppression, paralysing every active, virtuous principle, hateful to God, and destructive to man; a wretched deprivation of all that gives zest to life, from which it would be the duty of every man to rescue his country.

In reflecting on the French revolution, I will not, I have not denied the various, the deplorable calamities with which it has been accompanied, the errours and crimes of its agents; yet I am still of opinion, that in the first assemblies there were many able, and many good men; but that the whole of their well meant efforts were counteracted and overpowered by false patriots, and still more by the torrent of revolutionary enthusiasm, which, swelling with uncontroulable impetuosity, overwhelmed and bore down all that attempted to moderate it, friends and foes, liberty and life.

I have not clothed an unprincipled female of athletick form, and loose manners, in the colours of the rainbow, in the cestus of virtue, love, and the graces: a good-natured Silenus, a glutton, and a *bon vivant*, wholly occupied in the sensual gratifications of his bed, his pullet, and his bottle: I have not wrapped such an animal in the dignified garb of philosophy and wisdom.

I pay no regard to those declaimers who describe Englishmen as a dissatisfied race, whom no king can govern and no God can please: a few honest efforts to economise and retrench, whether the reins are held by an Addington, a Pitt, a Fox, or a Grenville administration, would act as a sovereign remedy for all our complaints; more particularly at a moment when we are engaged in a struggle which requires every aid that union, men, money, and national spirit can afford.

In one of his revolutionary speeches, Mirabeau called the English government an absolute monarchy, burthened and expensively incumbered with a complex republican machinery.

I cannot agree with this ingenious but corrupt Frenchman; for I thank God and our forefathers, that the King of England is, as he should be, restrained by the omnipotence of law; that a considerable portion of our members of parliament are representatives actually chosen by the people; that partial privileges and unjust exemptions are gradually wearing out and counteracted by the good sense of the times.

But what is more than all, the constitution of Great Britain, *contains within itself proper and safe remedies for its own imperfections.*

In reply to the advocates for moderate reform, it has been said, that a licentious and seditious spirit, fomented by French emissaries, had gone forth, and rendered that which at any other period would have been highly useful and desirable, not only inexpedient but dangerous at the present moment, when it becomes the duty of all good men to strengthen the hands of government, against principles which threaten to loose the bands of society, and break down the salutary barriers of law, religion, and property.

[*Lounger's Commonplace Book.*

REFORM.

"It is better, (says a modern writer) that reformation should be difficult, or even unattainable, than that laws should be uncertain, and the enjoyment of life and property precarious."

Being asked if reform was never to be risked, he almost confessed as much, for a reason personal, and not at all applicable to the subject, "because the promoters of it will, in every instance, be sacrificed, as the bulk of mankind always think enough has not been done."

Another of his reasons for delay, is, "that abuse should become decrepid, hoary, and in its dotage, before you attack it; any institution, law, or custom, generally despised and ridiculed, however colossal, must, in a given time, tumble to the ground, unsupported; its removal *then* will not endanger publick tranquillity.

"I consider every evil as trifling, when compared to rouzing the vengeance, and exciting the energies of that omnipotent sovereign, the people; in a word, I prefer the leprosy, the itch, and a thousand little nasty teazing diseases, which fret a man dismally, I confess, to the plague, to pestilence, and famine. I would rather pay a government of my own countrymen, ten or even twenty per cent., of all I possess, than be stripped by a Gallick pro-consul."

RETIREMENT.

Past experience and present example evidently prove, that few men, however ardently they may long for it, that few men are qualified for that situation, of all others the most trying to human virtue and resolution, *the having nothing to do;* yet to this state, the majority of mankind look up with envy and expectation.

I never yet knew a man, after a life spent in business, who, on retiring, did not feel wearisomeness and regret, unless he retained a share in the interest, a right of superintending interference; or had acquired a new taste for some interesting pursuit in literature, in art, or in science.

In the instances, which have fallen under my observation, agriculture, as affording constant occupation, and alternately exciting hope and fear, without which, *the mind must die*, however healthy the body; agriculture has most effectually answered the purpose.

Solitude is often necessary, and sometimes agreeable; but I cannot help thinking that retirement is considerably improved, by now and then having somebody to tell how pleasant and comfortable a thing it is.

EPIGRAM.

From the French.

Chloe's form'd by the Graces to please,
She's tempting, rich, lovely and young;
I die whilst reflecting on these,
But *revive* at the *noise of her tongue.*

R. A. D.

From the French.

Ned, in a long and sleepy poem,
Attempts to run my writings down;
And I, my just revenge to show him,
His verses read to half the town.

R. A. D.

The price of The Port Folio is Six Dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

Printed and Published, for the Editor, by SMITH & MAXWELL,

NO. 28, NORTH SECOND-STREET.